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Non-interventionism of the Left: The Keep America Out of the War Congress, 1938-41

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Historians of isolationism often focus upon anti-interventionism of the right. Yet, with the renewed interest in this subject, scholars are now revealing that there exists a far wider ideological base to protests against New Deal diplomacy. Manfred Jonas' pioneering *Isolationism in America 1935-1941* (1966) has shown that isolationism, up until Pearl Harbor, possessed left as well as right-wing strains. Little attention has, however, been given to The Keep America Out of War Congress (KAOWC), a pacifist-socialist group which – from 1938 to the Autumn of 1940 – was the only national organization specifically created to oppose Roosevelt's overseas commitments.[1] Even after the more powerful America First Committee was organized in September 1940, the KAOWC was able to attract groups which felt decidedly uneasy over America First's militant nationalism, strident defence posture, and conservative backers. Indeed, its youth affiliate, The Youth Committee Against War (YCAW), was called 'the most active youth organization against war'.[2] Offering a left-liberal critique of Roosevelt's foreign policy, the KAOWC attempted to unite pacifist groups, trade unions, the Socialist Party, youth organizations, and unaffiliated intellectuals behind its programme of neutrality and social reform.

The Congress was born amid increasing international pessimism. Such events as the Spanish Civil War, the *Anschluss* crisis, and the fall of Nanking, all revealed a world hovering on the brink of general conflict. Roosevelt's recent Quarantine speech of 5 October 1937 and the Panay incident on 12 December 1937 could well portend direct American involvement in the Pacific. Events seemed to be bearing the ominous 'deadly parallel' to 1917.

Few Americans were more apprehensive than the leader of the

Socialist Party, Norman Thomas. While visiting Europe in 1937, he became convinced that war between Hitler and Western Europe was inevitable. In his eyes, the United States could only build a new socialist society by remaining aloof from the coming struggle. Almost immediately upon his return, Thomas was authorized by the Socialist Party's executive committee to form an antiwar coalition. Fortuitously, at this very time, pacifist societies were planning new strategies. The recent defeat of the Ludlow Amendment and the impending termination of the Emergency Peace Campaign – a coalition of peace and civic groups promoting neutrality and economic access for 'have-not' powers – appeared to indicate the need for new alignments. Perhaps the coalition of trade unionists, intellectuals, and socialists which had formed the People's Council of Americans for Democracy in 1917 could come together again.

The Keep America Out of War Congress was officially founded at a rally held on 6 March 1938, in the New York Hippodrome. The official host and sponsor was the Socialist Party, and the chairman, veteran pacifist reformer, Oswald Garrison Villard. Here, Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr. warned an audience of some 4,500 against ever again basing American prosperity upon trade with belligerents. Far better, said the Wisconsin Progressive, to compensate for trade losses by government work programmes. Other speakers, besides Thomas himself, included columnist John T. Flynn, retired general William C. Rivers, automotive union leader Homer Martin and pacifist columnist Ernest F. Meyer.[3]

The Hippodrome rally was only the beginning: the next step involved organizing the first National Anti-War Congress. Responding to a spirited call issued by such prominent liberals as Bruce Bliven, editor of the *New Republic*, 1,226 delegates met from 28 to 30 May in Washington's Rialto Theatre. Religious, socialist, labour, youth, and farm groups were all represented, and state and regional meetings were held simultaneously. The Congress' national platform called for withdrawal from such 'imperialist' involvement as the stationing of American ships and marines in China's war zones; the scrapping of plans for industrial mobilization, conscription, and foreign alliances; the termination of war trade; and national adoption of a war referendum. More important, the Congress created a skeleton organization (at first called the Keep America Out of War Committee), and made provision for local and state units.

Within several months, the Youth Committee Against War (YCAW) became affiliated with the Congress. A federation of socialist,

Protestant and student youth groups, it possessed its own separate organization. Originally called the Youth Committee for the Oxford Pledge, it had been founded in May 1938, after communists had pushed the American Student Union and the American Youth Congress in the direction of collective security.

The Congress never lost the character of a makeshift coalition. For most of its life, the KAOWC was composed of the Socialist Party plus six militant peace organizations: The Peace Section of the American Friends Service Committee (ALSC); The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR); The World Peace Commission of the Methodist Church; The American Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WIL); The National Council for the Prevention of War (NCPW); and The War Resisters League (WRL). By coordinating such organizational efforts, the stated goals of the Congress – the promotion of 'a practical legislative and informational programme to keep the United States out of War' – could hopefully be realized.[4]

The leading officer was supposedly the national chairman. Among the Congress's national chairmen were John A. Lapp, a prominent labour arbitrator who held the post from the KAOWC's founding until September 1939; John T. Flynn, a muckraking writer who then retained formal leadership until late 1941; and John Finerty, a civil liberties attorney who had the position at the time of Pearl Harbor. Villard was honorary chairman, while several vice-chairmen were chosen in 1941, but their role was also purely honorary. By the same token, policy was formally made at the annual plenary meeting, where up to 600 delegates voted upon officers and programmes.

Day-to-day power, however, was lodged in a permanent governing committee, composed of about forty socialist and pacifist leaders. This body usually met monthly in New York City.[5] Even within the governing committee, influence was wielded informally by a small number of people. Such individuals included Norman Thomas; Mary Hillyer, socialist textile trades organizer and executive director in 1941; Alice Doge, organizational secretary; and Frederick J. Libby, head of the governing committee and executive secretary of the NCPW.

Sporadic efforts were made to secure more of a local base, and, by July 1940, there were fifty autonomous units, located primarily in eastern industrial cities and frequently organized by local socialists. Also affiliated were fifty 'cooperationg' groups, composed primarily of peace councils established by the NCPW.

An examination of the group's formal structure can only offer a partial account of the group's role. A far greater indication of the

Congress' appeal – and of the shifts within the Congress' leadership – can be seen by examining the variety of KAOWC supporters.

At first the KAOWC attracted labour and farm leaders. Among the signers of the 1938 Call were respresentatives of some of the most vibrant and militant trade unions, including the United Auto Workers, the Lithographers Union, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, and the 'Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters'. Several locals from such socialist oriented textile trades unions as the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) were strongly in evidence. Yet by 1940 the number had dwindled considerably, and by 1941 only four labour representatives remained on the governing committee. Ocasionally, individual labour leaders would address the Congress, such as ILGWU educational director Will Herberg, anarchist editor Carlo Tresca, and the CIO's associate research director Stanley Ruttenberg.[6] Yet if labour played an increasingly inactive role, so did farm groups. While a variety of farm leaders had endorsed the 1938 Call – including National Grange leader Ray McKaig – by 1941 total farm participation on the governing committee was limited to three individuals.

Pacifists composed another part of the early coalition. Such prominent peace leaders as Kirby Page, pacifism's most noted publicist of the interwar period, signed the 1938 Call, as did Protestant and Jewish clergymen. Even in 1941, when pacifist groups were dropping their KAOWC affiliation, many pacifist churchmen and organization leaders served in a personal capacity on the governing committee. While most of the clergy backing the KAOWC were Protestants, some prominent Rabbis remained with the group until Pearl Harbor, and the radical Catholic, Dorothy Day, spoke to one KAOWC meeting.[7] Pacifists were also strong in the YCAW, whose chairman in 1941 was the future civil rights leader, James L. Farmer, Jr., then occupying the vice-presidency of the United Christian Youth Movement.

The Socialist Party, prominent from the beginning, became an increasingly strong bulwark. By 1941 the governing committee was heavily manned by New York socialists. The executive secretary, Mary Hillyer, was a strong socialist, as was her predecessor Clarence Senior, once party secretary. Norman Thomas was undoubtedly the most prominent KAOWC leader. If the KAOWC did not recruit for the Socialist Party (in fact the party feared that a socialist tinge would kill the organization), the work of the party and the KAOWC were virtually merged during Thomas' 1940 presidential campaign.[8] By the same token, much of the YCAW staff was composed of members of

the Youth People's Socialist League, a body which had opposed intervention in 1917.[9]

The Congress also included a large number of liberals. Although many of the initial sponsors dropped out by 1940, others remained. Several backers came from the arts, including Cyrus Leroy Baldridge (later lapsing from his pacifism sufficiently to illustrate *American Guerilla in the Philippines),* playwrights Victor Wolfson and Morrie Ryskind, poet Babette Deutsch, and actress Michelle Strange. An occasional academic, such as historian Harry Elmer Barnes, a few Manhatten educators, and several philanthropists rounded out the leadership.

Although essentially a coalition, the KAOWC shared a common ideology. One tenet centred around the relationship between war and poverty. The Congress in 1938 demanded 'jobs at home and not through death on the battlefield,' asserting that the Roosevelt administration sought war in order to end domestic depression. A war boom might bring temporary prosperity, but eventually led to low farm prices, a new depression, and 'untold misery and brutality for the American people.'[10] Warning against 'armament economies', the Congress in 1940 demanded heavy taxes on war profits and claimed that only the American Congress, acting through a Congressional committee, could avoid padding a defence budget.[11]

The coming of the European war merely heightened KAOWC anxiety. Butter must still come before guns. As German panzers raced through France and a defence-minded Congress slashed welfare appropriations, Alice L. Doge, the Congress' organizational secretary, asked rhetorically, 'What has become of the reforms of the New Deal?' Similarly, Senator Burton K. Wheeler, noting the sudden rush of businessmen to administrative posts in Washington, told a joint Congress-America First rally that 'The President is playing the game of the Morgans and the Rockefellers.' In 1941 the KAOWC endorsed 'democratic control' of all banks, defence industries, and natural resources: 'An economic system built on the private corporate basis is at odds with a political system based on democratic equality,' it declared.[12]

The Congress strongly stressed interventionist threats to organized labour. For example, the KAOWC claimed that secret government mobilization plans involved the conscription of a million men. On 'M-Day', or 'Mobilization Day', a centralized defence council would assume dictatorial powers. With strikes outlawed, wages slashed, and national censorship imposed, America would truly become a garrison

state.[13]

Indeed, it feared that the nation was already well on the road to militarism. Registering for selective service was itself 'regimentation'; peacetime conscription established the groundwork for fascism at home and military adventures abroad. When eight students from New York's Union Theological Seminary (including David Dellinger) were jailed for a year for refusing to register for the draft, the KAOWC chapter of Washington, DC declared, 'The conscientious objector is a conscientious peace-maker. His place is not in prison.' If the KAOWC was unable to foresee that the second world war would provide no safeguards for many war opponents, it still spent much time in proposing ways to aid the 'CO'. The Congress also complained about the administration of military camps: bad food, abusive discipline, anti-semitism and race riots were all noted.[14] The YCAW was even more pacifist, making the Oxford pledge of refusing to bear arms for the nation part of its 1940 programme. Labelling registration day, 16 October 1940, a 'Day of National Mourning', it cooperated in varied protest demonstrations.[15]

Civil liberties were strongly stressed: one could almost hear echoes of Jane Addams in the Congress' claim that war itself destroyed democracy. In 1938, the KAOWC warned that '. . . a war against fascism abroad will bring fascist dictatorship at home.' The banning of isolationist radio commentator Boake Carter, well-timed spy scares, the Supreme Court decision on Jehovah's Witnesses, the increased stress upon 'fifth column' activities of aliens and 'decent citizens' were only the beginning.[16] Almost as if in anticipation of some of the administration's wartime restrictions, the Congress said in June 1941 that both communists and German-American Bundists should be allowed full civil liberties.[17] The National Youth Anti-War Congress of 1940, sponsored by the YCAW, declared that funds slated for Martin Dies, Jr.'s House Committee on Un-American Activities should be transferred to Robert LaFollette, Jr.'s Senate Civil Liberties Committee. It further claimed that on many campuses discussion was suppressed, newspapers censored, and individual anti-war faculties and students denounced unfairly.[18]

As the United States was moving to a position just short of war, the media became increasingly suspect. Even the Columbia Broadcasting System was assailed – for the radio programme of a Columbia University historian, James T. Shotwell, supposedly possessed an interventionist bias. When two prominent KAOWC sponsors, Senator Gerald P. Nye and Bennet Champ Clark, demanded investigations of

foreign propaganda and Hollywood films, the KAOWC offered hearty concurrence. Similarly, KAOWC called for boycotting the sponsor of Walter Winchell's sensationalist broadcasts. 'We'll wash our hands of Jergens', it said Even the Red Cross was criticized: its efforts to recruit medical technologists for the armed forces could only serve to foster war propaganda.[19]

A second general Congress concern centred around western colonialism and American's open-door diplomacy. If America First devoted comparativeiy little attention to Asia, the KAOWC often spoke out. Fearing future 'Panay incidents', the Congress said, 'We believe all the dollars invested in Socony-Vacuum or Electric Bond and Share Company are not worth the life of a single American boy.' America, the KAOWC continued, should withdraw her cruisers from Singapore, forego the inclusion of Samoa in her defence zone, leave the Philippines and scrap plans for additional bases in the South Pacific. By 1941 the Congress was calling for normalizing diplomatic and trade relations with Japan, an independent and neutralized Philippines, and the repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act.[20]

The Congress' barrage against Asian involvement always remained steady. Norman Thomas warned a thousand New Yorkers attending a KAOWC rally in October 1940, that the administration's frontier now extended to Singapore and Shanghai. By risking an Asian conflict in order to preserve western imperialism, the United States would enter 'the most unnecessary, the most insane, the most terrible war the world has ever known.' Frederick J. Libby told fellow Congress leaders that any embargo upon Japan could only threaten the Philippines and Shanghai's International Settlement, while journalist William Henry Chamberlin, speaking before a KAOWC mass rally in May 1941, warned that an oil embargo would result in a major war with Japan.[21]

Similarly, the KAOWC warned the United States against using the world crisis to create her own Latin American empire. In 1938 the Congress opposed any retaliatory embargo upon the Mexican government, which had recently nationalized foreign oil holdings. The Panama Canal, the Congress declared, should be under joint hemispheric control. The United States' unilateral occupation of Greenland, it later declared, must never be repeated elsewhere.[22]

If anything, the British Empire was even more strongly criticized than the United States. In 1938 the KAOWC decried British bombings on India's northwestern frontier and, in 1940, the Chicago branch sponsored a lecture by a leader of the Indian Congress party. One

KAOWC pamphlet pointed to John Bull's indifference to the fate of both Weimar and loyalist Spain. Dorothy Detzer, a leader in both the KAOWC and the WIL, suggested that since Clarence Streit's Union Now movement undoubtedly had its 'spiritual headquarters' in England, it should register as a foreign agent.[23]

A third Congress tenet involved defence. The title of one KAOWC pamphlet printed in 1938 summarized the Congress' position: 'Nobody Can Attack Us.'[24] Even after the fall of France, national chairman Flynn claimed that Germany still could never invade a continent some 3,000 miles away. One KAOWC tract, entitled 'If Hitler Wins', facetiously queried whether Germany could simultaneously control Europe, appease Stalin, build a navy sufficient to conquer South and Central America, destroy the armed forces of the United States, and 'make Fritz Kuhn our Führer'.[25]

Given KAOWC fears of domestic repression and American imperialism, and given its belief in a purely continental defence, it doggedly maintained that breakdowns in America's neutrality invariably led to peril. While the KAOWC favoured a vague internationalism – going so far, in fact, as to endorse a world federation – it denied that the United States had a duty to enforce 'orderly processes' everywhere. Once the fighting broke out, the Congress continually called upon Roosevelt to join with other leaders of neutral nations to offer America's services in mediation (yet the Congress leadership was cautious about Sumner Welles' 1940 mission to Europe, for he could well, in Congress eyes, be as dangerously partisan as Colonel House in 1915).[26] In 1940 it called for reciprocal trade (excluding, of course, war materials), while in 1941 it urged tariff reduction, an international currency system, and a world federation that would contain a world bill of rights. Opposing a decisive Allied victory, the KAOWC sought a peace involving 'neither Axis domination nor Anglo-American domination.[27]

Russia's shifting role only intensified the isolationism of Congress. Although such staunch opponents of communism as Thomas and Bertram D. Wolfe, the journalist, were on the governing committee, the KAOWC feared that any American loans to recently-invaded Finland would threaten the Soviet Union. Similarly, the Congress insisted that the American ambassador remain in Moscow (and that such representation be resumed in Berlin.) Such recognition certainly did not signify approval of either regime. Rather, it indicated the urgency of keeping diplomatic channels open. Hitler's attack on Russian served only, in the mind of the Congress, to open up a 'predatory struggle between

the two bloodiest dictators' – a conflict not worth 'one American penny, one American man, or one American hour.'[28]

Rigid neutrality, however, did not imply insensitivity. Hoping that food would be provided for the hungry peoples of occupied Europe, the KAOWC endorsed Herbert Hoover's National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies. Furthermore, the Congress not only maintained that the United States should become 'a haven of refuge to harassed exiles from war areas', but said that it should supply shipping passage. Challenging the stringent immigration criteria established by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, the governing committee asked, 'Is our government so destitute of facilities for detecting true spies that it must close the last door of hope to thousands of Jews, Spaniards, Poles, and Czechs who hate fascism and love democracy?'[29]

Given the era, passions on both sides of the interventionist controversy were strong. A *New Republic* article listed the KAOWC among 'the appeasers', perhaps forgetting that the journal's own editor, Bruce Bliven, had signed the organization's original call only three years before.[30] The Congress, in turn, was not reluctant to escalate its own rhetoric. In 1941, the KAOWC warned against 'Anglo-American domination of the world'; its national chairman Finerty warned that Roosevelt's interventionism might lead to a 'Free Americans' movement, similar to De Gaulle's 'Free French'.[31]

Promotional mechanisms varied. The KAOWC distributed literature, maintained a speaker's bureau, recorded radio messages, released periodic bulletins through its own Anti-War News Service, offered testimony before congressional committees, collected petitions, lobbied in the US Congress, and held rallies. One petition, which objected to American and British committments to total victory included such intellectuals as architect Frank Lloyd Wright, philosopher William Ernest Hoching, and Harlow Shapley.[32] KAOWC leadership established the Writer's Anti-War Committee, directed by socialist journalist Sidney Hertzberg. These writers published the newsletter *Uncensored* as well as several pamphlets.[33] Among *Uncensored's* editors were such prominent journalists and commentators as Harry Elmer Barnes, Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, John Chamberlain, William Henry Chamberlin, James Rothy, Quincy Howe, Oswald Garrison Villard, Milton Mayer, Frank Hanighan and Bertram D. Wolfe. The Youth Committee Against War cooperated in getting such speakers as Senator Wheeler and Villard on campus, drafted petitions against such Roosevelt policies as convoys, and even distributed simulated dog tags bearing the slogan, 'Put the Death Tag on War, Not Men.'[34]

Some promotional techniques were quite imaginative: during one Memorial Day rally, backers were urged to distribute doughnuts along with a KAOWC leaflet, 'Doughnuts not Doughboys.' A Chicago rally combined a Norman Thomas speech with some high culture, offering live selections from Mozart and Schubert.[35] At the 1941 annual meeting held in Washington, workshops were organized to cover such topics as 'Guns or Butter,' current labour conditions, conscription problems, and world federation. An anti-interventionist 'Information Please', patterned after the popular radio programme, included such panelists as Strange, Ryskind (who wrote the book to 'Of Thee I Sing'), and the crusading journalist James Roty.[36]

KAOWC also cooperated selectively with other anti-war groups. While avoiding all contact with such communist-backed bodies as the Emergency Peace Mobilization and the American Youth Congress,[37] the KAOWC and its youth affiliate worked with such organizations as the youth division of the Canadian Cooperative Commonwealth, the Jane Addams Peace School of New York, the Citizen's Mandate for Immediate Peace, and the National Peace Conference. In 1941 it endorsed the activities of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Workers Defense League – groups all critical of the domestic status quo.[38]

Far more controversial, given its liberal constituency, was the Congress' relationship to America First. While opposing America First's stress upon rearmament and its silence concerning conscription, the KAOWC still welcomed its formation. As America First possessed a far wider following, the Congress supported Norman Thomas' proposal for occasional joint efforts.[39] Some New York rallies were co-sponsored by both groups, and America First gave amounts ranging from $500 to $1,00 to such groups as the Congress, the YCAW, the WIL, and the NCPW.[40] Much to the dislike of conservative America First backers, radio addresses by Thomas and Mary Hillyer, the KAOWC executive secretary, were sponsored by the America First Committee. Flynn for a time served both as national chairman of the Congress and eastern regional director of America First, and several other KAOWC leaders aided intergroup coordination. Yet when Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh, America First's most noted leader, gave his Des Moines speech on 11 September 1941, in which he claimed that 'Jewish groups' were among those agitating for war, the Congress governing committee strongly objected. The aviator, by singling out American Jews as a separate group, could en-

courage domestic intolerance.[41]

At first glance, it might appear as if the KAOWC could act as a powerful force against intervention. It could rely upon several long-standing organizational networks – including the Socialist Party and national pacifist groups. If such groups were themselves small, their views had long had wide exposure in reformist and religious circles. In addition, their leadership was composed of people who had spent much of their lives speaking, organizing, and raising funds. Thomas was a charismatic speaker, Libby an effective and conciliatory coordinator, Hertzberg an able publicist with ties to the world of liberal journalism. The Congress could appeal to various groups repelled by the strident nationalism of America First: labour organizers, blacks (including a Baptist pastor in Harlem named Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who served as a sponsor of the New York chapter), Jews, and liberals. While reformist merchant Ira Hirschmann and clergyman Harry Emerson Fosdick both declined to be members of the national committee of America First, they felt at home with the KAOWC.[42] In addition, the Congress was blessed with a youth organization both intelligent and enthusiastic. And, by taking an 'ecumenical' attitude towards America First, the Congress could avoid the kind of internecine quarreling which had plagued another action group, the shortlived No Foreign War Committee.[43] With financial backing from the wealthy America First Committee, and with such KAOWC leaders as Thomas and Hillyer broadcasting under America First auspices, it appeared as if both left and right wings on non-intervention would be strong enough to withstand Roosevelt's continued interventionism.

Yet there were always serious problems. First, particularly after Hitler conquered the European continent in May 1940, liberal defections were extensive and accompanying disappointments deeply felt. Villard was probably not the only KAOWC backer to think *et tu, Brute* when as prominent a peace advocate as Philip Bernstein, chairman of the Commission on International Peace of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, suddenly resigned from the governing committee (Villard did admit that Bernstein's decision must have come after 'many days and nights of spiritual tribulation'). And Rabbi Bernstein must have been far from alone in finding this was 'the most difficult spiritual problem' he had ever wrestled with.[44]

Second, labour and farm leaders did not remain in the Congress. With labour – the one real chance of gaining a mass base – lost by 1940, the group remained limited to upper-middle-class intellectuals. New York Advertising executive Chester Bowles (who had contributed

small amounts to the KAOWC) asked 'What, after all, is the matter with these labour leaders, many of whom, I am sure, feel the way we do and who, for the most part, are afraid to open their mouths?'[45]

Third, by 1941, the pacifist groups, which had assumed so much leadership within the Congress, were themselves withdrawing. Like so many peace coalitions, the KAOWC was divided between those opposing war in principle, and hence demanding personal witness, and those more interested in political action and a popular front. Convinced that war was inevitable, the more ideological pacifist groups concentrated more and more upon internal issues – clarification of views, recruitment of membership, possibilities for non-violent action, and protection for conscientious objectors. As such ephemeral groups as the KAOWC could vanish in conflict, staunch pacifists deemed it increasingly unwise to remain in close association.[46] Tacit cooperation with America First, whose first plank called for an impregnable national defence and whose chairman was a noted general, Robert E. Wood, must have been galling to some pacifists. So, too, must have been the appearance of such a man as right-wing journalist O.K. Armstrong, speaking in his American Legion uniform, at a major KAOWC rally. The kind of prudential arguments which the Congress often used, centring around the inability of Hitler to attack the United States directly, could well detract from what many a pacifist defined as 'testimony' against all martial activity. Hence, the WRL, the AFSC, and the FOR had withdrawn from the KAOWC by August 1941, and Libby was one of the few pacifists of influence remaining amid increasing Socialist Party dominance.

A fourth problem was organizational. Although the KAOWC sponsored occasional rallies in such areas as Chicago, it was seldom effective outside the New York area.[47] Its organizers had the disadvantage of having to divide their attention between the parent groups and the KAOWC superstructure. National chairman Flynn, not a socialist himself, felt continually frustrated by having to please those who combined opposition to war with visions of socialization. In believing that only America First could unite people of diverse political, racial, and religious backgrounds, he devoted more and more of his time to the America First Committee.

Such defections soon took their toll in rising deficits, totalling close to $1,000 by October 1941. Even the 1941 annual meeting – a Memorial Day rally and workshop in Washington, DC – had created much financial anxiety, and by November office secretaries had to be laid off.[48] While Libby's own NCPW received continuing support

from such donors as international lawyer John Foster Dulles and Chicago textile merchant William H. Regnery, it was all the KAOWC could do to secure small donations.[49]

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the KAOWC quickly dissolved. Property was turned over to a hastily formed body, the Provisional Committee Towards a Democratic Peace, which in time became the Post-War World Council. While condemning the 'crimes' of Japan's 'military clique', the Congress said that the Japanese raid had resulted from many years of Western Imperialism. Like America First, the Congress maintained that the Administration's adherence to its principles would have avoided conflict with the Axis. The reformist thrust of the KAOWC, however, remained. The last KAOWC function, the 'No AEF Dinner', was suddenly turned into 'The Bill of Rights Dinner'; the YCAW became 'The Youth for Democracy'. Pleas were offered for equal distribution of wartime economic burdens and for 'a just and lasting peace.'[50]

Yet for those so committed, the future could only reveal apprehension. Libby, hoping that a negotiated peace might arrive soon, said that he could only 'see through clouded spectacles.' His fellow pacifist and KAOWC backer, the Reverend John Haynes Holmes of the New York Community Church, recalled a passage in Augustine's *City of God* describing a conqueror which looked ever more like the conquered and feared 'nothing but disaster all around.'[51] Had both men been clairvoyant, it is doubtful that, despite the destruction of the Nazi war machine, they would have been reassured.

NOTES

1. Preliminary treatments of the Keep America Out of War Congress may be found in Charles Chatfield, For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941 (Knoxville, Tennessee 1971), 295-97, 319-25 and Bernard K. Johnpoll, Pacifist's Progress: Norman Thomas and the Decline of American Socialism (Chicago 1970), 205-07, 216.

2. 'Youth Propagandists and the War' in Propaganda Analysis, IV, (27 October 1941), 5.

3. New York Times, 6 and 7 March 1938.

4. Minutes, governing committee, 4 March 1940, in the Keep America Out

of War Congress materials in the Papers of the Socialist Party, Duke University. All primary citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Duke collection. Occasionally joining the KAOWC in its early period was World Peaceways, dedicated to promoting peace advertising and displays.

5. 1940 KAOWC Programme and By-Laws, adopted 31 May 1941. The governing committee, in fact, was little more than the neutrality bloc of the National Peace Conference (NPC). The NPC itself had been organized in 1935 to popularize such broader aims as disarmament and was composed of some forty peace, religious and civic groups. See Report on the KAOWC for the Socialist Party, 20 July 1940 (hereafter SP Report).

6. Herberg, 'Some Remarks on Aid to Britain', 1 November 1940 in KAOWC materials, New York Public Library (hereafter NYPL). Tresca noted in KAOWC bulletin, 28 March 1940, NYPL; Ruttenberg, KAOWC bulletin, 7 June 1940.

7. Day, KAOWC release, 5 October 1940.

8. For discussion of the socialist role within the KAOWC, see Howard R. Penniman, 'The Socialist Party in Action: The 1940 National Campaign' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis; University of Minnesota 1942), 59; SP report; Johnpoll, op. cit., 216.

9. Penniman, ibid., 56, 58.

10. 1938 programme.

11. 'Armament Economics', Action Memorandum, 10 July 1940; tax request, KAOWC programme as in Chicago bulletin, 12 March 1940; investigation request 1940 programme.

12. A.L. Dodge to friends, 22 May 1940; Wheeler, New York Times, 31 May 1941; resolutions passed by the delegates to the KAOWC (hereafter 1941 programme). It should be noted that the 1941 programme did claim to oppose confiscation of private property and talked in terms of 'democratically-controlled organizations.'

13. Labor Anti-War Committee, 'A Twenty Year Conspiracy Against American Labor' (undated).

14. Opposition to registration, joint memorandum, 25 July 1940; Washington unit, Anti-War News Service bulletin (hereafter AWNS), 22 November 1940; Co's, 1941 programmes; military camps, minutes, quarterly meeting, governing committee, 19 June 1941.

15. Oxford pledge, Paterson, op. cit., 127; YCAW demonstrations, New York Times, 14 and 17 October 1940.

16. Fear of domestic fascism, 1938 programme; on Boake Carter and spies, 'We Believe the American People Are Being Pushed Into A Foreign War' (1938 pamphlet); on Supreme Court and fifth columnists, Action Memorandum, 10 July 1940.

17. 1941 programme.

18. New York Times, 31 December 1940.

19. On Shotwell, minutes, general staff, 19 February 1940; on Clark and Nye resolutions, 1940 programme and minutes, executive committee, 5 August 1941; on Winchell, governing committee, 3 March 1941; on Red Cross, joint resolution of peace groups, 7 May 1940.

20. 'We Believe . . .' (1938 pamphlet); 1938 programme, 1941 programme.

21. Thomas, release, 5 October 1940; Libby, minutes, general staff of

neutrality bloc, 19 February 1940; Chamberlin, in 'Peace Congress Meets in Capital' in Christian Century, XLXVIII (11 June 19410, 770-71.

22. For anxieties over the Hemisphere, see KAOWC Record (Summer 1938) and 1940 and 1941 programmes.

23. On India, Peace Action of the National Council for the Prevention of War, V (July 1938), 2; and Chicago KAOWC bulletin, 12 March 1940; on Weimar and Spain, 'Cooperate – But Not for Foreign War"(1938 pamphlet); Detzer, minutes, general staff, 19 February 1940.

24. 'Nobody Can Attack Us' (1938 pamphlet).

25. Flynn statement, bulletin, 10 May 1940; 'If Hitler Wins' (undated pamphlet).

26. War referendum, 1940 programme; on 'orderly processes', 'Cooperate . . .' (1938 pamphlet); on Roosevelt mediation, resolution of KAOWC mobilization, 21 February 1941; on Welles mission, minutes, general staff of neutrality bloc, 19 February 1940, and minutes, governing committee, 4 March 1940. For trade, currency and bill of rights, see 1940 and 1941 programmes.

27. 1941 programme.

28. Opposition to Finnish loan, bulletin, 14 January 1940; on ambassador to Russia, Peace Action of the National Council for the Prevention of War, VI (December 1939), 1; statement of Mary Hillyer on the invasion of Russia, release of 25 June 1941.

29. On food relief, 1941 programme; on refugees, 1941 programme and letter of governing committee to Cordell Hull, 23 June 1941.

30. Alfred Horlings, 'Who Are the Appeasers?' in New Republic, CIV (27 January 1941), 111.

31. 'Anglo-American domination', 1941 programme; Finerty, New York Times, 12 November 1941.

32. AWNS release, 22 March 1941.

33. Flynn claimed that Uncensored was sponsored and financed by the KAOWC until taken over by the America First Comm[illegible] See John T. Flynn, 'Notes on Formation of the New York Chapter of the [illegible]ca First Committee', undated manuscript in the Papers of John T. Fly[illegible] University of Oregon (hereafter Flynn Notes).

34. Dog tags, minutes, governing committee, 31 Mar[illegible]941.

35. Doughnuts, A. Dodge to friends, 16 May 1940; C[illegible]ago KAOWC bulletin, 18 March 1940.

36. Washington rally and workshop, 'Make Democracy Work', 30 May-1 June 1941; 'Information Please', Anti War News Service (AWNS), 5 November 1941.

37. Flynn, 'Statement on Emergency Peace Mobilization' (undated); on American Youth Congress, New York Times, 25 April 1941.

38. On the National Peace Conference, AWNS, 5 November 1941; on the other groups, 1941 programme.

39. Minutes, governing committee, 6 January and 31 March 1941; Penniman, op. cit., 1976; Norman Thomas to General Robert E. Wood, 5 May 1941, in the Papers of the America First Committee, Hoover Institution of War, Peace and Revolution (hereafter AFC Papers).

40. For AFC contributions, see Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention (Madison, Wisconsin 1953), 227; Ruth Sarles, 'The Story

of America First' (unpublished manuscript, 1952), AFC Papers. For Thomas and Hillyer, see speakers file, AFC Papers, and John F. Sinclair to AFC, 7 January 1941, AFC Papers. Flynn was particularly enthusiastic about the YCAW, declaring that it had done wonders with little money. See J.T. Flynn to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., 6 December 1940, the Papers of John T. Flynn, Universuty of Oregon.

41. Libby, who signed the statement, was still 'anxious that nothing be done to undermine Lindbergh, Wheeler and Nye.' F.J. Libby to N. Thomas, Resolution, quarterly meeting, governing committee, 21 September 1941, the Papers of the National Council for the Prevention of War (hereafter NCPW Papers). Thomas had long wanted Lindbergh to renounce Hitler's political and racial views directly. Johnpoll, op. cit., 229-30.

42. R. Douglas Stuart, Jr. to I. Hirschmann, 5 November 1940, AFC Papers and Harry Emerson Fosdick to AFC, 19 August 1940 and 26 September 1941, AFC Papers.

43. Justus D. Doenecke, 'Verne Marshall's Leadership of the No Foreign War Committee, 1940' in Annals of Iowa, XLI (Winter 1973), 1153-72.

44. O.G. Villard to Philip Bernstein, 13 June 1941 and copy of letter of P. Bernstein to N. Thomas, both in the Papers of Oswald Villard, Harvard University; P. Bernstein to J.T. Flynn, 14 April 1941, Flynn Papers; minutes, governing committee, 29 April 1941.

45. C. Bowles to William Benton, 28 March 1941, AFC Papers; C. Bowles to S. Hertzberg, 16 January 1941, AFC Papers.

46. Chatfield, For Peace and Justice, op. cit., 298-301; Charles Chatfield, 'Pacifism in American Life, 1914 to 1941' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis; Vanderbilt University 1965), 675-76; Charles Chatfield, 'Introduction' in Peace Movements in America (New York 1973), xi.

47. Chatfield, For Peace and Justice, op. cit., 297.

48. N. Thomas to F.J. Libby, 10 May 1941, NCPW Papers; minutes, executive committee, September 1940 and 18 November 1941.

49. F.J. Libby to John Foster Dulles, 22 June 1940 and 3 October 1941; William H. Regnery to F.J. Libby, 9 December 1940 and 26 March 1941, NCPW Papers.

50. Minutes, executive committee, 8 December 1941; minutes, quarterly meeting, governing committee, 16 December 1941; New York Times, 12 December 1941; item Nation, CLIII (20 December 1941), 842.

51. John Haynes Holmes to J.T. Flynn, 16 January 1942, Flynn Papers; F.J. Libby to P. Bernstein, 18 December 1941, NCPW Papers.